

# Life expectancy drop exposes racism, class bias

By Monica Moorehead

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) released “provisional life expectancy estimates” for the U.S. based on provisional mortality data for January through December 2020. The statistics show that overall U.S. life expectancy was reduced by a year and six

months during this time period. The disturbing report indicates the steepest decline of life expectancy since World War II. The conclusions from the report are: “U.S. life expectancy at birth for 2020, based on nearly final data, was 77.3 years, the lowest it has been since 2003. Male life expectancy (74.5) also declined to a level not seen since 2003,

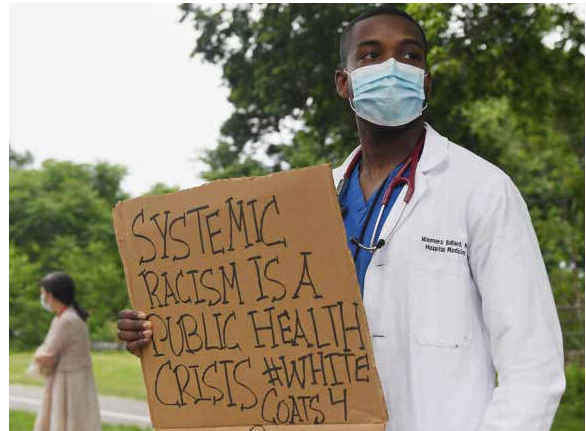
while female life expectancy (80.2) returned to the lowest level since 2005.”

Two major factors for this statistical drop are the pandemic and the opioid crisis. The pandemic has caused the deaths of over 600,000 people in the U.S. Although the death rate has slowed due to millions getting vaccinations, the current spread of the Delta variant is causing another drastic rise in hospitalizations. At the same time, businesses and public places have eased their restrictions on mask wearing and social distancing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the rise in drug overdose deaths, attributed to 14% of the cases in the 18-month decline in life expectancy, was due to isolation and despair caused mainly by the pandemic. There was a 30% increase in these deaths from 72,151 in 2019 to a staggering 93,331 in 2020, according to a separate CDC report released on July 14.

## Impact of racism and class

The NCHS reports the impact of this decline in life expectancy upon communities of color, stating, “The Hispanic [Latinx] population experienced the largest decline in life expectancy between 2019 and 2020, from 81.8 to 78.8 years, reaching a level lower than what it was in 2006 (80.3 years), the first year for which life expectancy estimates by Hispanic origin were produced.



Health care worker links racism in health care to police murder of George Floyd in 2020.

“The non-Hispanic Black population experienced the second largest decline in life expectancy (from 74.7 to 71.8) and was the lowest estimate seen since 2000 for the Black population (regardless of [Latinx] origin). Life expectancy for the non-Hispanic white population declined from 78.8 to 77.6 years, a level last observed in 2002 for the white population (regardless of [Latinx] origin).”

The figures show that life expectancy for people of color, especially Black and Latinx, has dropped by three years. Black people already had a lower life expectancy before the pandemic hit, compared to Latinx and white people.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on essential workers — especially in the areas of health care, mass transit, restaurants and grocery stores and other industries that require people to work outside of home. These workers tend to

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## WORKERS WORLD editorial

# Defend Cuba! Defend socialism!

Anti-communist forces — led by the U.S. government — are mounting a no-holds-barred attack on revolutionary Cuba. That country continues to advance with determination on its own road to socialism, begun Jan. 1, 1959, when forces led by Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Ché” Guevara overturned the U.S.-backed government of dictator Fulgencio Batista.

The current assault on Cuba was launched full-scale on social media at the beginning of July. But the U.S. first declared ideological and economic war on Cuba in 1960 by placing a brutal economic and social blockade on the country that remains in place.

Since then the U.S. has tried every tactic to break the Revolution — from direct

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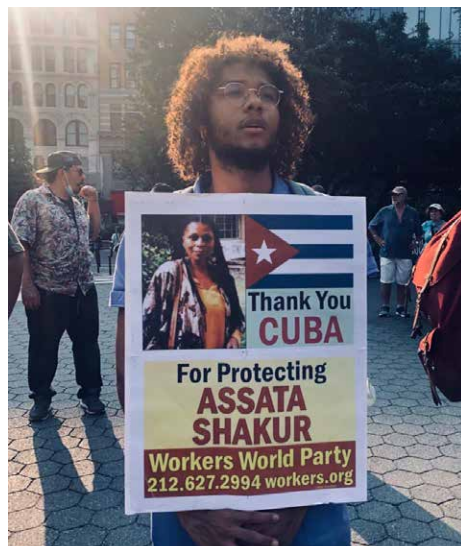


PHOTO: RADHAMES MORALES

Solidarity with Cuba is worldwide. Here, Union Square, New York City, July 15.

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Celebrate the Cuban Revolution with Workers World!

Workers World/Mundo Obrero joins with the Cuban people in celebrating the 68th anniversary of an event which changed the course of history for their island nation. On July 26, 1953, Cuban revolutionaries boldly attacked the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and simultaneously conducted a siege of the army barracks in Bayamo.

These courageous acts were aimed to strike a blow against the brutal U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Although the military goals were not achieved, and the struggle suffered a temporary setback, the armed struggle had reached a new stage that continued until the dictatorship was overthrown on Jan. 1, 1959. As the guerrilla forces fought in the mountains, an underground movement spread across the country.

Cuba has not only developed in every sphere since the socialist revolution, this island nation has carried out acts of international solidarity to aid oppressed countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, whether with military might or medical personnel and supplies. This assistance has been given generously, despite the horrific blockade implemented against Cuba by Washington for six decades.

Even now during the pandemic, despite having a dearth of medical supplies for inoculations, Cuba plans to share COVID vaccines with countries denied them by the imperialist West.

Cuba has deservedly won the support and respect of peoples around the globe. Workers World has shown our unwavering solidarity with this socialist country on this newspaper's pages and in countless activities on the streets.

Your donations count!

We know you read WW/MO for class truth, free from corporate lies and geared to working and oppressed people. **We need your help!** Join the WW Supporter



Fidel and other Cuban guerrilla fighters in Sierra Maestra Mountains in late 1950s.

Program, initiated 44 years ago, to aid in funding the newspaper. Since the early 1990s, these donations have also helped maintain the workers.org website.

New articles are posted daily at [workers.org](http://workers.org). During the pandemic, the weekly newspaper has been printed and mailed out once a month; and WW weekly editions continue to be posted in PDFs on our website.

For an annual donation of \$75, \$100 or \$300, members receive a year's subscription, letters with news of activities and analyses of timely issues, and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, for friends. Members can receive our book, "What road to socialism?" (Notify us.) Or read it free at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books).

Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World. Mail them, with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up to donate online at [workers.org](http://workers.org).

We're grateful for your help in building Workers World!



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

Join us in the fight for socialism!

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people's movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

MUNDO OBRERO
WORKERS WORLD
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Vol. 63, No. 30 • July 29, 2021
Closing date: July 28, 2021

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [workers.org](http://workers.org).

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

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# Dreamers respond as federal judge rules DACA illegal

By Gloria Rubac

In a slap in the face to hundreds of thousands of immigrants, a federal judge in Houston ruled July 16 that President Barack Obama had no authority to establish the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. This ruling bars the government from approving any new applications.

Judge Andrew Hanen, appointed by George W. Bush in 2002, ruled in favor of Texas and eight other conservative states that sued to halt DACA, which currently provides limited protections to about 650,000 Dreamers (DACA participants). Fortunately, those Dreamers will not be affected but will have to continue to annually renew their status.

The ruling is Hanen’s final judgement on a 2018 lawsuit filed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and eight other states’ officials against the federal argument. The complaint argues that Texas and the other states face irreparable harm because they bear extra costs from providing health care, education and law enforcement protection to DACA recipients.

Following the cruel and vindictive ruling from Judge Hanen, the response of United We Dream, the largest immigrant youth-led network in the country, was swift.

“The moment we are in is urgent. This court ruling on DACA, the continued detention, deportation and expulsion of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, mostly Black immigrants, should be a blaring siren to Democrats to act or face the political consequences. We need bold and transformative leadership,” stated Greisa Martinez Rosas, Executive Director of United We Dream Action.

“While we have always known that DACA is right, Judge Hanen’s decision to side with Republicans, who have been hell-bent on deporting immigrants, is a reminder that DACA has never been enough. Only citizenship can protect immigrant youth, TPS [Temporary Protected Status] holders, farm workers and other essential workers from the looming threat of deportation,” Martinez Rojas continued.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC  
**Norma Gonzales, United We Dream Texas, lead organizer speaking at rally in Houston, July 19.**

At a hearing last December, a group of DACA recipients represented by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the New Jersey Attorney General’s Office asked Hanen to dismiss the lawsuit. They argued Obama had the authority to institute DACA.

Nina Perales, a lawyer for MALDEF, told Hanen that the states lack standing to sue, because they weren’t harmed by DACA, as benefits such as work authorization for recipients were not given by DACA but authorized under other programs and regulations that had previously been created.

MALDEF President and General Counsel Thomas A. Saenz reacted to the July 16 ruling: “This case should never have been filed and should never have progressed beyond its filing. Current DACA recipients remain fully protected, but the decision threatens hundreds of thousands of others, who should also be protected as they continue to contribute to the betterment of our nation.” (tinyurl.com/3pktbf4d)

MALDEF explained that this decision all but ensures the matter will be settled either by the U.S. Supreme Court or Congress. The issue of DACA is not resolved.

RAICES, the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, responded immediately to the ruling: “Today’s decision by Federal District Court Judge Andrew Hanen to permanently enjoin the DACA program for undocumented youth is regressive, abhorrent and utterly despicable. RAICES supports thousands of DACA recipients and helps hundreds of undocumented youth file new applications in Texas every year. Many of our staff members are DACA recipients. This decision will spread fear and confusion throughout our workforce and our community, a community that has already been devastated by the impact of COVID-19, xenophobia and the decision-making paralysis in Congress.” (tinyurl.com/82snjz7u)

## United We Dream rally in Houston

In Houston, United We Dream Texas held a July 19 demonstration outside of the federal courthouse where Judge Hanen’s courtroom is housed. “Enough is enough,” Houston resident and DACA participant Susie Lujano said at the protest. She said she was “heartbroken” by the decision. “I was brought here when I was two and love my home.”

Speaking through tears, Lujano explained that she is pregnant, and both she and her fiancé are Dreamers. “We are scared and do not want to go back to living in fear and worrying that we could be separated from our children.”

Another Dreamer militantly told the media, “Let me remind Judge Hanen and the rest of the Republican Party that it was DACA recipients who were and are still fighting on the front line trying to save lives during this horrible pandemic. We are essential to this country,” Demaris Gonzalez said. She is an immigrant rights activist with the Texas Organizing Project.

Representatives with the Workers Defense Project and F.I.R.E. (Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees Everywhere) participated in solidarity with United We Dream. Both Spanish and English-language news media covered the protest extensively. □

# Rideshare drivers’ strike demands justice and recognition as workers

By Judy Greenspan  
San Francisco

“We need to stop letting them dismantle labor rights! How is there a gig company without gig workers? There is no Uber without drivers. There is no Lyft without drivers! There is no Doordash without drivers!”

Those were the sentiments expressed by former Uber driver and activist Eddy Hernandez at the strike organized by Rideshare Drivers United (RDU) July 21, designated as a day for app-based gig drivers in parts of California and around the U.S. to strike.

Over 100 striking drivers participated in a march, car caravan and rally, which began in front of Lyft’s San Francisco headquarters near the Embarcadero and ended at Uber headquarters. The drivers came from as far away as Sacramento, San Jose and the Central Valley to speak out against the corporate greed of the gig companies and to demand a repeal of Proposition 22.

Proposition 22 — passed in November

2020 and funded heavily by the gig driving companies — legally classifies drivers as “private contractors,” rather than workers. RDU, which represents more than 30,000 gig drivers nationwide, began in Los Angeles and has been organizing for the right of gig drivers to be defined as workers, so that they have the right to organize unions. (tinyurl.com/bt4rntm8)

The strike also demanded passage of the PRO Act, which would expand union rights and make it easier for unorganized workers to unionize. Rallies and other actions were scheduled to take place in Los Angeles; Cleveland; Austin, Texas; Boston; Las Vegas; Baltimore and Denver. Cleveland drivers held their first RDU organizing meeting and voiced their grievances.

Gig drivers nationally were asked to turn off their apps and not work for the day. According to RDU organizers, many Bay Area drivers participated in the strike by doing just that.

Erica Mighetto, one of the RDU strike organizers, set the tone of the strike action: “We’re here today to send a message to Uber and Lyft that we will not be

silenced. We are not less than a living wage, transparency, benefits and a voice on the job, just like every other worker in this country.”

At the rally in front of the block-long Uber headquarters, gig drivers, many of them immigrant workers, testified about the economic and social injustices faced on the job. “How can we be happy when we don’t have benefits like medical, dental and then vision,” said Ibrahim Diallo. He went on to compare the disparity of wages between gig and taxi cab drivers. Diallo concluded, “Uber is sucking the blood of the drivers.”

Driver organizer Ahmad Ibrahim Moss said, “We are fighting to protect our jobs, for the right to organize and for voting rights too.” Moss spoke for all of the workers when he said, “We work to make the rich richer, but we should own it. We should own that damn building,” pointing to the Uber headquarters behind him.

RDU organizers were adamant in their determination to keep fighting for justice for gig workers. Mighetto said it clearly, “You know what? If these companies are

going to steal from us and take our livelihoods, they can expect us to be banging on their doors all the time.” □



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN  
**Striking gig drivers and their supporters outside the San Francisco Uber headquarters July 21.**

# People’s verdict on gentrification scheme: Thumbs down

By Dave Welsh  
Oakland, Calif.

West Oakland turned out July 17 at Taylor Memorial Church for a community speak-out organized by City Councilmember Carroll Fife. On the agenda was a plan by the wealthy Fisher family to bulldoze into the Port of Oakland (the fifth largest port in the U.S.) and build a high-rise luxury complex and baseball park by the Bay. Most speakers were not impressed.

Derrick Muhammad, from International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, said the Black community should not support it. “This process is all

smoke and mirrors,” he said, “a farce, a show, trying to make West Oakland and Chinatown believe they will get justice and benefits. But this is not true.

“They promise jobs. But they never intended to provide jobs for Black people, no real apprenticeship programs. The Oakland A’s have no commitment to hire Black people. For us there is nothing but displacement and gentrification, destruction of our community.”

Helen Duffy said the Fisher family, owners of Gap Stores and the Oakland A’s, “are sending out slick mailers and trying to ram this through. We need to stand up against Fisher.”

Mercedes Rodriguez said replacing

Howard Terminal with a ballpark “will not benefit our community. Transportation will be terrible.”

Chris Roberts said, “This is a big money project. They’re giving away the waterfront.”

A member of the Oakland United Coalition said, “Our kids in West Oakland are growing up with asthma, but there is no remediation plan about the environmental impacts. There is no provision for living wage employment, or 35% affordable housing, or access to jobs for the formerly incarcerated. There is no local hire job policy so our community can stay in their homes and avoid gentrification.”

Despite community opposition, the city

council voted 6-1 for a nonbinding “term sheet,” which advocates believe may move the project forward. □



**Derrick Muhammad, second from left, former secretary treasurer, ILWU Local 10, with members at 2017 demonstration in San Francisco.**



# Who is Ruchell Magee and why has he been in prison 58 years?

By Judy Greenspan

Ruchell Cinque Magee, a U.S. political prisoner who has served over 58 years in California prisons, was again denied parole July 15 by the state’s Board of Parole Hearings. Why won’t the state of California allow Magee to go free?

His story begins as a Black man from Louisiana, who since 1955 has had to deal with this racist injustice system. Magee remains in prison today because he participated in a bold, heroic action in an attempt to free political prisoners George Jackson, John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo, known as the Soledad Brothers, over 50 years ago.

Magee grew up in Louisiana; and at the age of 16, he faced a racist conviction in 1955 for “attempted aggravated rape” for having a relationship with a white girl in an area dominated by the Ku Klux Klan.

His conviction occurred at the same time that Emmett Till was lynched in Money, Miss., for supposedly whistling at a white woman. Magee was sentenced to eight years in Angola State Prison. He was legally ordered to leave Louisiana in 1962; and when finally released from Angola in 1963, Magee went to Los Angeles. ([tinyurl.com/333jn64z](https://tinyurl.com/333jn64z))

Magee was arrested that same year after a disagreement with someone about a \$10 bag of marijuana. After his arrest, he was beaten so badly he had to be hospitalized for three days. He was then railroaded by the California Superior Court of Los Angeles County, via extreme malpractice by both prosecution and defense attorneys, and sentenced to seven years

to life in prison for a bogus charge of attempting to kidnap someone to commit robbery for \$10.

California built its vast prison system and exponentially increased its prison population of poor Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples by sentencing them to indeterminate sentences for petty theft and drug-related crimes. Magee was one of the victims of this racist and outrageous sentencing system. Once convicted, it was almost impossible to get parole during these years.

### Becoming politicized

Like George Jackson and so many other incarcerated Black people, Magee became politicized while inside, adding the middle name of “Cinque” after the African freedom fighter Cinqué, who led a rebellion on the slave ship La Amistad. Magee believed and stated, “Slavery 400 years ago, slavery today — it’s the same but with a new name.”

He became known throughout the prison as a jailhouse lawyer. He filed a wrongful death lawsuit and helped win a big settlement for the family of Fred Billingsly, who was tear-gassed and beaten to death by San Quentin guards while in his cell in February 1970.

On August 7, 1970, Jonathan Jackson, the 17-year-old brother of George Jackson, burst into a Marin County courtroom armed with guns with the intention of taking over the courtroom to demand the release of the Soledad Brothers. They were charged with killing a white guard at Soledad State Prison, notoriously known for racist murders and brutality against Black and Brown prisoners.

Three prisoners, William Christmas,

James McClain and Magee, who were in the courtroom that day, joined the escape attempt. Magee and Christmas were in court to testify in support of McClain, who was facing charges for assaulting a guard at Soledad after the Billingsly murder.

Jackson and the three prisoners took several hostages, including Judge Harold Haley, Deputy District Attorney Gary Thomas and three jurors, and attempted to escape in a van. The San Quentin guards fired into the van, killing everyone but Magee and the prosecutor, who were both badly wounded.

This August 7 will mark the 51st anniversary of Jonathan Jackson’s heroic effort to free his brother and two other political prisoners.

Magee wrote, “Once the facts can be clearly established and shown to the people, where these dogs are practicing slavery under the color of law, then this automatically requires a special investigation by the people to look for themselves. They will find that these judges are criminals.” ([freeruchellmagee.org/about](https://freeruchellmagee.org/about))

Magee wanted to conduct a very political trial that challenged the validity of the prison system and recognized his right like Cinque’s to fight for his freedom against slavery.

The legal team of Magee’s co-defendant Angela Davis, who was facing charges for supposedly purchasing the weapons used in the courthouse action, had a different legal strategy and separated the cases. Magee went on alone in his legal defense battle, eventually defending himself pro se.

Fortunately the murder charges were dropped, but he was convicted of “simple kidnap.” The verdict in the more serious kidnapping charge was disputed, and Magee believes he was acquitted of that charge. ([tinyurl.com/6fpweaf4](https://tinyurl.com/6fpweaf4))

Magee was sentenced in 1975 to life in prison and has gone before the parole board many times since then. Each time, he has been denied parole. He is now 82



years old, having served over 58 years in prison, and is now incarcerated at the California Medical Facility.

### Free Ruchell Magee! Free them all!

The Coalition to Free Ruchell Magee, the Jericho Movement and other groups organized a groundswell of support for Magee during his last parole effort July 15. A current petition to California Governor Gavin Newsom to grant clemency for Magee states: “As an elder, he faces constant mental and physical health risks every day from nearly six decades of incarceration. With the COVID-19 pandemic raging across California’s prisons throughout 2020 and 2021, Ruchell has been in significant danger of falling ill.” ([tinyurl.com/5hf9xt2](https://tinyurl.com/5hf9xt2))

Incarcerated people in California’s prisons have suffered high COVID infection rates and deaths due to the prison system’s refusal to stop transfers and cell extractions and to provide adequate medical care to people inside.

The Jericho Movement, Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee and International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee have launched a coalition called “The Spirit of Mandela” to organize the international campaign to free all U.S. political prisoners, most of whom are elderly, ill and facing death inside. ([spiritofmandela.org](https://spiritofmandela.org))

Magee, Sundiata Acoli, Mutulu Shakur, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Mumia Abu-Jamal, David Gilbert and Leonard Peltier are some of the aging political prisoners who have served decades of time for their bold defiance of racist murder and injustice. This year, 2021, has been designated the Year of the Political Prisoner. It’s time to free Ruchell Cinque Magee and free them all! □

## Black August: A tribute to freedom fighters

By Lamont Lilly

*The following slightly edited article was first published in August 2013. Lilly ran as Workers World Party’s candidate for vice president in 2016.*

### George Jackson

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on Aug. 28, 1963, galvanized hundreds of thousands in the streets of Washington, D.C. A. Philip Randolph helped to establish the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Harlem, N.Y., on Aug. 25, 1925. The Haitian Revolution first broke the chains of French colonialism in August 1791. August marks the Nat Turner slave rebellion of 1831 and the Watts Uprising of 1965. The Philadelphia Police Department first raided the MOVE organization on Aug. 8, 1978, giving way to the unjustly imprisoned MOVE 9. August also bears the births of Fred Hampton, Marcus Garvey and Mutulu Shakur.

“Black August” is a monthlong celebration that marks the remembrance of the lives of freedom fighters who gave their all for Black liberation, freedom, radical resistance and mass consciousness. The official origin of Black August was in honor of the fallen soldiers who valiantly fought to liberate Black Panther leader George Lester Jackson from the

modern-day slave trade we now call the U.S. penal system.

### Jonathan Jackson and Angela Davis

Black freedom fighters — James McClain, William Christmas, Ruchell Magee, Khatari Gauden and 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson — the brother of George Jackson — led a courthouse rebellion on Aug. 7, 1970, in a brave display of all-out resistance and armed struggle. Unfortunately, lives were lost as they typically are in any war for liberation. Magee, who is currently still incarcerated, was the only survivor. And though our heralded comrade, George Jackson, was not freed, the efforts of Jonathan and others would inspire decades of continued resistance and revolutionary solidarity.

George Jackson had just completed his book “Soledad Brother,” a philosophical revolutionary classic. Jackson, however, was assassinated by San Quentin prison guards one year later on Aug. 21, 1971. His second book, “Blood in My Eye,” was published posthumously by Black Classic Press. Jackson’s legacy of resistance has inspired millions worldwide, while his literary works continue to teach even in his physical absence.

This is the background in which Black August was first formed. It was deep within the belly of the California penal system that it was first embraced

and formally established as a month of reverence, as a time of revolutionary celebration.

The heroic Attica prison rebellion which began on Sept. 9, 1971, and was eventually drowned in blood by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller’s stormtroopers (the N.Y. state police), with the deaths of over 33 prisoners and 10 guards, was sparked by Jackson’s assassination.

Incarcerated workers today have continued to protest and press forward all over the United States. Hunger strikes over the past year have roused hundreds of thousands in states such as California, Georgia and North Carolina. Letter writing campaigns have served as vital lines of inspiration and direct communication. Human rights activists such as political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal have served as critical catalysts, tirelessly working to empower the voices of those who continue to be oppressed by the public and private prison industry.

Today, in the spirit of continued resistance, we honor the deaths of Mark Clark, Fred Hampton and Geronimo Pratt. We honor the sacrifices and life work of political prisoners Eddie Conway, Sundiata Acoli and our freedom fighters in exile like Assata Shakur. We honor the countless victims of COINTELPRO’s callous attacks upon the people. We duly recognize the destructive ills of capitalism and



George Jackson

its disastrous effects upon the oppressed worldwide. In the age of the prison-industrial complex, school-to-prison pipeline and widespread police brutality, the struggle for justice and liberation is alive now more than ever.

In the 42nd year of Black August, may we all take heed to the spirited words of our brother and mentor, George Lester Jackson: “Settle your quarrels; come together; understand the reality of our situation; understand that fascism is already here, that people are dying who could be saved.” (“Soledad Brother”) □



# Billionaires in space

By **Betsey Piette**

Centibillionaire Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and multibillionaire Virgin Group founder Richard Branson used the profits they extracted from their companies’ workforce to launch themselves on personal space rides in recent weeks. And centibillionaire SpaceX founder Elon Musk is expected to follow.

One thing is clear: None of these billionaires did any of the work that got them into space. All the labor to build their capsules, rocket launchers, launchpads and more was done by workers, whose labor these billionaires exploited.

These same billionaires’ earthly fortunes came from superexploiting workers in their factories, sweatshops and warehouses. They managed to pay little to no taxes to support public services. Nothing of benefit to humankind will come from this.

On the contrary, the success of these personal space launches threatens to send vast amounts of waste into space, increase the potential for mining on the moon and open the door for greater militarization of space. And these launches generate increased pollution during a time of severe climate crisis.

Only the very rich could afford seats on these flights. Bezos raised millions in a lottery where 7,600 people participated to win a seat in his capsule. The winner paid \$28 million. The lottery gives Bezos a list of prospective customers for future flights. His company, Blue Origin, has already amassed \$100 million in private sales for more trips.

Branson, whose Virgin Galactic spacecraft beat Bezos by nine days to be the first civilian space launch, charged less at \$200,000 per seat. Yet none of the wealth generated by these projects will benefit their workers through increased wages or benefits.

**Bezos’ big mouth**

In a move that angered millions of people, Bezos bluntly told the truth at a news conference after his multimillion-dollar joyride: “I want to thank every Amazon employee and every Amazon customer, because you guys paid for all this.”

Already aware of how Bezos has enriched himself

by exploiting their labor, many of Bezos’ employees at Amazon have recently been organizing for a union. They know they are paid much less than the value they produce. And the work is harmful.

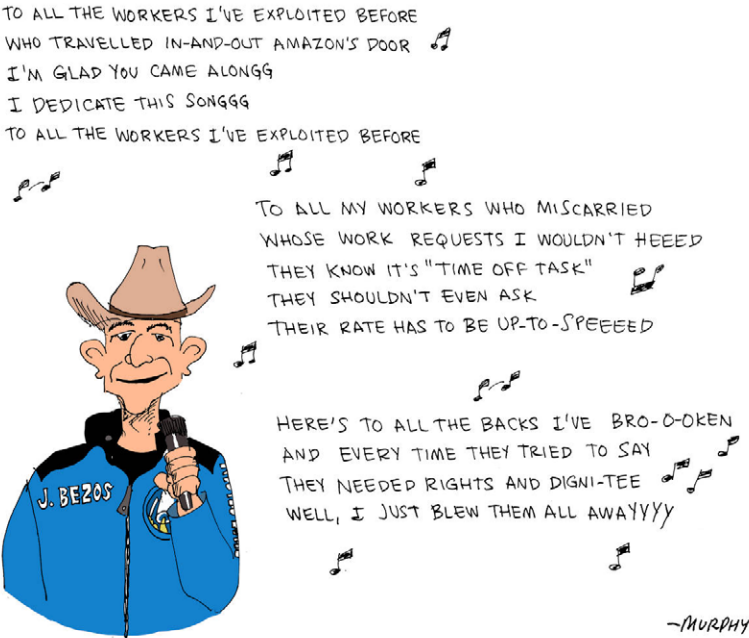
A recent investigation by the Strategic Organizing Center found Amazon’s serious injury rate was twice the warehouse industry average. (cbsnews.com, June 2) Pregnant workers have miscarried after being refused leave by the company. Many struggle to get workers’ compensation when injured. (Reveal News, Sept. 29, 2020)

Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union that tried to unionize Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., responded to Bezos’ comments: “These are people who put their lives on the line during the pandemic and did not receive adequate support from Jeff Bezos. In the middle of the pandemic, he even cut people’s wages, when he didn’t need to. People are being forced to work in conditions where their health and safety is not being adequately protected. There is so much more Jeff Bezos should be doing for his employees.” (Democracy Now!, July 22)

Many question how someone who gained tens of billions of dollars in personal wealth during the pandemic, who lied to prevent his workers from unionizing, could joke about exploiting his workers to pay for private space trips for billionaires. Their advantage arises because by promoting “space tourism,” these billionaires are counting on access to military contracts — public money — to fund their future initiatives.

**Money from militarizing space**

Corporations pay lobbyists and back politicians who pitch the falsehood that private companies run public agencies better than the government can. This argument has virtually shut down NASA and nearly dismantled the U.S. Postal Service — the oldest public entity in the U.S. Many privately owned utility systems, transportation services and former public schools have failed to deliver better products or services — but they have made many



capitalists richer at public expense.

Like Musk’s SpaceX, which won a \$149 million contract from the Pentagon to build missile-tracking systems, these private companies rely heavily on public funding. Many have billions in contracts from NASA, the military and telecommunications. The contracts let SpaceX and Bezos’ Blue Origin control the infrastructure of space. (Democracy Now!, July 22)

**China is the target**

U.S. corporations and politicians alike worry that China’s technological innovations will give it the competitive edge in space. China’s new Tiangong space station received its first three astronauts June 17 — a major milestone in the country’s rapid scientific and technological development. By contrast, the International Space Station, launched in 1998, will be decommissioned in the coming years, likely making Tiangong humanity’s only permanent outpost in space.

U.S. corporate management aims to overcome Chinese gains by using militarization to win funding and space-related contracts. Space privatization through companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin, heavily reliant on public contracts and built with billions of public dollars, may appear to be the solution. Clearly the billionaire owners of these companies are aware of this. □

# Bill Gates, Big Pharma block vaccines to the Global South

by **Jim McMahan**

The COVID-19 death rate continues to be high worldwide, especially as the virus ravages the developing world. A recent study reveals India’s death toll could be 3.4 to 4.7 million people, with the official death toll of 414,000 being a vast undercount. (Center for Global Development)

The lack of access to life-saving vaccines, from Latin America to Africa to the Middle East and Asia, is the main reason for the pandemic continuing to spread. It’s a case of Western pharmaceutical companies — Big Pharma — making fabulous profits because of their monopoly control. The oppressed working masses of the Global South are still being largely denied, months after an April World Health Organization (WHO) report of 87% of the vaccines going to wealthy nations with only .2% to developing countries.

In New York City, demonstrators marched on Pfizer’s world headquarters and blocked traffic July 14. They demanded that the imperialist company end its patent restrictions on the COVID-19 vaccine and instead expand its availability across the globe.

Seattle City Council member Kshama Sawant sponsored a similar demonstration in front of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in May. Sawant and protesters called out Big Pharma and the Gates foundation, who with President Joe Biden’s support, are blocking intellectual property (IP) waivers for formerly colonized countries. Similar protests are being held around the world.

Big Pharma corporations have racked up huge fortunes from the pandemic. Pfizer is expected to make \$26 billion



Protesters block traffic outside Pfizer headquarters, July 14, New York.

in annual sales for its vaccine, and Moderna \$19.2 billion. (Reuters, July 21) Meanwhile 85% of the world’s countries aren’t expected to be fully vaccinated until 2023.

It’s hard to imagine a single event that could make a stronger case for international cooperation than a global pandemic. Instead the crisis exposes the irreconcilable conflict between the needs of the masses and the profits of the few.

**How Bill Gates blocked access to vaccines**

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was hoped that the world would unite against the virus. Public health leaders thought that the immensity of the pandemic would override a global drug system based on market monopolies. Governments spoke of shared interests. Drug companies pledged nonprofit approaches.

In March 2020, a plan was created inside WHO to set up a Technology Access Pool or C-TAP; C-TAP would

create a voluntary intellectual property pool. In opposition, Bill Gates launched a bold bid to overturn C-TAP. Gates’ initiative was called ACT-Accelerator; Accelerator committed to respecting exclusive IP claims for the drug companies.

Gates was able to outmaneuver the WHO, based on his being a so-called “wise leader” — along with being worth \$130 billion. He dismissed many warnings that there would be a crisis of supply and deprivation, and he blocked all challenges to his authority.

Gates’ dedication to IP rights is related to his control of Microsoft. He wants control of the world’s data — an extremely valuable commodity. The Gates Foundation is deeply invested in Big Pharma, including Pfizer. It owns shares of the German company BioNTech, having invested \$55 million in 2019, along with \$52 million in CureVac, another German company. They’re also shareholders in Vir Biotechnology. With no shame, stock pickers say these companies could be winners for Gates and company. (The Motley Fool, Sept. 24, 2020)

On May 5, the Biden administration reversed its position and came out in support of an IP waiver after intense pressure from over 100 nations. The next day the Gates foundation relented and came out for a “narrow IP waiver.” But Germany remains in opposition inside the World Trade Organization, the decision-making body. Demonstrations have targeted German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Waiving IP rights will increase vaccination rates worldwide. Mandating technology transfer must also happen. It’s crucial that Gates and Big Pharma be unmasked for their role in perpetuating the international pandemic.

In contrast to big pharma profit-making, Peoples China and Cuba have advanced public health through socialism. China expects to produce over 3 billion vaccine doses this year and is the main supplier to many developing countries. Likewise, Cuba has produced its own vaccine and has sent medical brigades in solidarity to fight the pandemic to many countries worldwide. □



# Lessons from the life of Donald Rumsfeld, war criminal

By John Catalinotto

When an ordinary official of an imperialist government dies, since there is usually nothing good to write about them, common practice for a working-class newspaper is to write nothing.

When someone like Donald Rumsfeld dies, to avoid comment means avoiding struggle. Rumsfeld, who died June 30, was far from ordinary. He was a world-class war criminal, who had major responsibility for the murder of millions of people.

That anyone, even in the corporate media, praises Rumsfeld and his work — and they did — should in itself be shocking proof of the criminal nature of U.S. imperialism and its agents.

In his first stint as secretary of defense, in 1975-77 under President Gerald Ford, Rumsfeld was a determined Cold War warrior. In his second stint, in 2001-06 under President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney — Cheney was a Rumsfeld crony for decades — Rumsfeld was a prime mover and planner of the U.S. invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

### Architect of U.S. war on Iraq

Along with Bush, Cheney, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Rumsfeld promoted two Big Lies to justify U.S. aggression against Iraq. The first was that the Iraqi government led by Saddam Hussein collaborated with al-Qaeda to attack the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001. The second was that Iraq possessed “weapons of mass destruction.”

U.S. intelligence agencies had no support for these lies, so Rumsfeld created his own reports. The government figures repeating them knew they were false. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who recited these charges at the United Nations to justify U.S. military action against Iraq, knew there was no evidence and knew the lies were invented to justify the war. (Hal Draper, New York Times, July 16, 2020)

The lies were enough to get backing for the U.S. military to initiate aggression against Iraq, something that Rumsfeld, Cheney, Wolfowitz and other “neocons” had aimed to do as soon as the 9/11 attacks gave them a pretext.

These neocons, with Rumsfeld in a leading role, promoted the U.S. strategy to reconquer those countries — like Iraq, Syria, Libya, Iran — that had won some independence and sovereignty, when the Soviet Union existed as a socialist counterweight to world imperialism.

To rally ruling-class support for what could turn out

to be costly as well as criminal, Rumsfeld argued for and put into practice the “shock and awe” strategy. A massive air assault on Iraq, followed by a massive invasion, he said, would bring a rapid victory.

Rumsfeld argued that this ambitious land and people grab could be carried out at minimum cost to the U.S. and its people, and little cost to Iraqi civilians, who would welcome the U.S. assault on Saddam Hussein. Besides being a war criminal, Rumsfeld was dead wrong with this prediction.

In the first weeks of the war on Iraq, even as the Iraqi Army was collapsing, the U.S. invasion force ran into resistance. Workers World newspaper’s analyst Fred Goldstein pointed this out in April 2003, weeks after the invasion began:

“The U.S. military and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld promised a quick and relatively bloodless war in Iraq. Their plan was based upon a massive ‘shock and awe’ campaign of initial bombing. ... The bombing took place. It produced only resistance. The most overpowering military machine in the history of humanity faced the heroic opposition of the Iraqi people from Day One of the war.”

Only months after the Pentagon’s ‘shock and awe’ air destruction of the Iraqi army and infrastructure, Iraqi guerrillas were inflicting casualties on the 150,000-plus U.S. troops in Iraq in 2003.

### Sowing divisions

During 2004 and 2005, a determined Iraqi resistance was killing and wounding U.S. troops. To avoid defeat in an urban guerrilla war, the U.S. occupation regime resorted to sowing and exacerbating ethnic and religious divisions among the Iraqi people.

All this was under the direction of Rumsfeld and the neocons, whose strategies led to the disintegration of the Iraqi regime and splitting its people. While Rumsfeld’s strategy failed to bring victory to U.S. imperialism, it created misery for millions of Iraqis — misery that continues.

The occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan cost somewhere near \$4 trillion. The military-industrial complex grabbed a lot of that in profits, making it understandable why they might praise Rumsfeld. For the working class in the U.S., and especially for the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and Sudan, he and others following his strategy in the upper levels of Washington can only be considered enemies.

Rumsfeld was equally criminal on a smaller scale in his support for torture during interrogations and his defense of the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. His crimes, however, went beyond Afghanistan and Iraq. When it

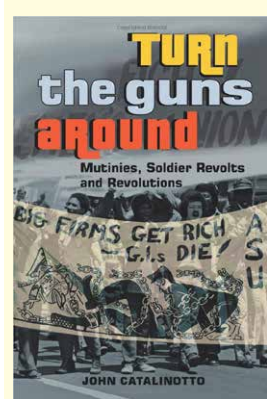


came to illegal aggression, Rumsfeld saw the big picture.

General Wesley Clark, former NATO commander and himself capable of bombing civilians — as his forces did in Yugoslavia in 1999 — claimed in a March 2, 2007, interview on Democracy Now! that he had a memo “that describes how we’re [the U.S.] going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran.”

While Rumsfeld had to resign in 2006, Libya and Syria were targeted during the Democratic administration that followed Bush; Sudan was split in two, and Iran has been subject to strangling sanctions. Lebanon faces collapse plus sanctions.

Unlike Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who eventually regretted his criminal role in pursuing the U.S. war against Vietnam, Rumsfeld defended his murderous policies to the end. The question to ask is what sort of system of government places someone with Rumsfeld’s characteristics in a position of power? And how do we rid the world of that system? □



## Turn the Guns Around

By John Catalinotto

Draftees and enlistees — eighteen-year-olds from the South Bronx, factory workers from Buffalo, miners’ sons from Kentucky, unemployed youth from Watts — hate the military and the Vietnam War. They throw a wrench into the Pentagon’s war machine, becoming leaders of the anti-war movement and organizing a union in the conscript military to battle war, racism and their officers.

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# Life expectancy drop exposes racism, class bias

*Continued from page 1*

be people of color.

Also Black and Brown people are more susceptible to the virus when living in overcrowded housing with multigenerational family members or traveling in overcrowded buses and subways for work. Many migrant workers are not eligible to receive health care. Due to their understandable fear of being detained or deported due to their undocumented status, many forego vaccinations.

Jon Zelnor, an epidemiologist at the University of Michigan, stated in a New York Times interview that “the federal government could have protected workers from risky work situations by providing income subsidies allowing them to stay home and could have ensured adequate protective equipment to workers in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.” (Dec. 9)

Some 2020 studies have shown that while the deaths of people of color and whites are equal when it comes to the virus, 60% to 70% of Black and Latinx people were more likely to be infected than whites. In a Veterans Administration

study in New Orleans, “Black patients accounted for 76.9% of those hospitalized with COVID-19, although they made up just 31% of the health system’s population.” (Dec. 9)

### Lack of health care for generations

The U.S. is the richest and largest imperialist country, but according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in the area of public health, compared to its peer nations it ranked a poor 27th out of 37 in 2018. (Washington Post, July 26) The decline in life expectancy for poor and working people must be viewed within the general social context of this ranking.

However, communities of color suffer the added burden of health care disparities that did not occur overnight but have been around as long as poverty has existed.

In a Feb. 8 WW article “Reparations, health care and the pandemic,” this writer noted, “The inequality of death during the pandemic reflects the fact that lack of adequate health care for Black people is not an isolated occurrence but has been a generational inequality.”

On June 3, a study was released

by University of Michigan Medicine researchers on health disparities between Black and white patients tied to white supremacy within class society. “From inadequate access to fresh food and clean water, to screening in early stages of disease or the inability to rent an apartment because of discriminatory housing practices, these long-standing systemic inequities for some Black Americans can have long-lasting effects on health.” (healthblog.uofmhealth.org)

Some of Michigan Health’s findings included: Black people have higher rates of obesity, heart disease and hypertension; and Black men have a 2.5 times higher rate of prostate cancer mortality. The lack of doctors of color means lack of medical visits. Nearly half of all Black, Latinx and Indigenous women had a lapse of insurance coverage between preconception and after delivering their babies, compared to approximately a fourth of white women.

There has been a huge jump in colon cancer among young African Americans due to a gap in early diagnosis. Black people are more likely than white people to develop dementia as they age, due to the

impact of high blood pressure on cognition, memory and executive function.

The National Poll on Healthy Aging indicated food insecurity disparities — by age, health status, race, ethnicity and education — have been potentially worsened by the pandemic. “Access to nutritious food and health status are closely linked, yet this poll reveals major disparities in that access,” says Preeti Malani, M.D., the poll’s director. “Even as we focus on preventing the spread of coronavirus, we must also ensure that older adults can get food that aligns with any health conditions they have, so we don’t exacerbate diabetes, hypertension, digestive disorders and other conditions further.” (healthyagingpoll.org)

These findings smash the racist myth that Black and other people of color are genetically prone to contract the coronavirus, rather than suffering from standard living conditions and health care they receive, which is not isolated but institutionalized. This is why reparations in the area of the right to health care must be a clarion call supported by all workers in solidarity with the most oppressed facing genocidal treatment. □



International Declaration of Solidarity with Socialist Cuba

If they touch Cuba, the world will rise up

*The following statement in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution was initiated by Chilean and Argentine communists and signed by scores of organizations, including Workers World Party. Translation by John Catalinotto, WW managing editor.*

We, the undersigned working-class political parties and anti-imperialist organizations from various countries of the world, raise our voices to express our solidarity with the Cuban people and government, led by President Miguel Díaz-Canel, which are confronting the U.S. blockade and the campaign of aggression against socialist Cuba.

The greatest threat is the U.S. blockade, established in February 1962 and maintained until today, with both Democratic and Republican presidents occupying the White House. The neo-Nazi Donald Trump aggravated it with 243 measures between 2017 and 2021, and Joe Biden keeps them in place, refusing to lift those economic and financial measures, not even the infamous decision to place Cuba on the list of “sponsors of terrorism.”

That continuity of the blockade shows that the U.S. political system is no democracy, as its leaders claim, but a plutocracy, or government of the rich.

It is a two-party system where Wall Street, the monopolies, the CIA, the Pentagon and their plans for world domination always rule. It is a two-party dictatorship of big capital!

The overwhelming majority of countries repudiate that blockade. Votes in the United Nations General Assembly since 1992 have shown this. There have been 29 votes in favor of Cuba, the last one on June 23, with a total of 184 countries against two (the U.S. and Israel).

Notwithstanding this repudiation of the blockade, which the U.N. qualifies as criminal and an act of genocide, Yankee imperialism maintains it.

The U.S. objective is to use hunger and disease to force the surrender of the noble people who opted for the Cuban road to socialism, with its roots in José Martí and the leadership of Fidel Castro, continued with Raúl Castro and now with new generations of leaders, its Communist Party, its mass organizations and the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

As the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. State Department, Lester Mallory, said in 1960, the aim of the blockade is to “provoke hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the government.” So far the blockade has

failed in its main objective of overthrowing socialism. It has been relatively successful in generating hunger and desperation in some sectors of the population, due to the shortages derived from the blockade.

Cuba is prevented from trading freely, accessing foreign currency, buying medicines and medical supplies, receiving charter flights and tourist cruises from the U.S., etc. Notwithstanding the international repudiation of the blockade, which it qualifies as criminal and an act of genocide, Yankee imperialism maintains it.

They punish shipping companies that transport oil to Cuba in order to cut off fuel, trade, transportation and electricity generation; they sanction banks that operate with the island, they block money transfers from Cuban relatives abroad, etc.

The Cuban Foreign Minister to the U.N. quantified the direct economic damages between April 2019 and March 2020 at \$5.57 billion, which increase to \$9.16 billion if computed until December 2020.

These are not just numbers. They translate into many things that the Díaz-Canel government cannot do due to lack of resources. As if that were not enough, the island’s economy suffered the impact of the COVID pandemic and the cessation of tourism, so its gross product fell almost 11 points in 2020. Despite this, the people remained firmly committed to the option of socialism and the party held its VIII Communist Party Congress in April 2021.

At the same time, the Cuban government made remarkable efforts against the pandemic, within its country and in solidarity at the international level. Within Cuba, its scientific and biochemical branch developed five vaccine candidates, two of which have already become vaccines: Abdala and Soberana 02. And Cuba has shown solidarity with many countries through 56 missions of the International Medical Brigade “Henry Reeve,” sending 2,500 doctors and health personnel.

Cuba’s path is not paved with rose petals.

There are many thorns that stick and hurt, as well as maneuvers by the “bad neighbor” and the Miami counterrevolutionaries, who with propaganda, networks and dollars, help the counterrevolutionaries from within, as in the case of the San Isidro “cultural” movement, Rosa María Payá’s NGO and others dependent on orders and money transfers from the State Department and USAID.

On July 11, several hundred Cubans gathered in a protest, pained by their unsatisfied basic needs, but driven by mercenaries who carried the baton under the pseudo-humanitarian label of #SOSCuba. With much opportunism, they took advantage of a peak moment of food shortages, fuel and power outages, along with days of increased contagions and deaths from COVID-19. They took to the streets in seven or eight cities, which the imperialist news agencies multiplied to 50. They were hundreds, in total some thousands, but those agencies multiplied them to “multitudes.”

While raising demands against hunger, the gusano leaders and agencies made it clear that their objectives were “freedom” and the “end of communist tyranny.” In other words, political objectives in line with those advocated by Biden, his Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Senators Bob Menendez and Marco Rubio, and other counterrevolutionaries from the Miami sewer.

The Cuban president was in the streets leading the defense of the Cuban Revolution and also to dialogue with the confused but honest part of the protesting people. He was very coherent and very Fidelista in calling on the revolutionaries to win the streets to defend the revolution, and to put himself in the front row in San Antonio de los Baños.

Díaz-Canel made it clear that he knows of several real reasons for the popular complaints, but 95 percent or more of the causes of these shortcomings are to be found in the prolonged Yankee blockade

and only 5 percent in government errors, delays, bureaucracy or disorganization. Let us emphasize: the fundamental cause of the shortages is the genocidal blockade maintained for 60 years by Washington!

It is in the hands of the Cuban government to analyze its part to correct and improve, even under the crossfire of the empire and its vassals. It is necessary to separate the confused or misguided people from the mercenaries who want to return to the semi-colony, the gambling den and the brothel of Batista’s times.

All data must be put in context. It is true that COVID cases have increased, but Cuba’s results are much better than those of the USA, Brazil and Argentina. The U.S. has 138 times more infections than Cuba and 384 times more deaths. The empire has so far refused to release the use of vaccine patents, as requested by the World Health Organization. And it dares to criticize Cuba in the health field?

For all these reasons, the undersigned parties and organizations ratify our solidarity with Cuba, we defend it from the blockade and the Yankee-Gusano [counterrevolutionary worms] maneuvers, and we are part of its Martí and Fidelista cause, we defend its embassies and consulates attacked in many countries, etc.

We demand the immediate end of the Yankee blockade and we ask that the Nobel Peace Prize be awarded to the Cuban International Medical Brigades “Henry Reeve.”

We demand that the U.S. return the usurped Guantanamo area and nullify the Platt Amendment, and grant freedom for political prisoner Ana Belén Montes, in a U.S. jail for almost 20 years for helping Cuba.

We demand that the U.N. amend its Charter to make a motion voted by two-thirds of the General Assembly binding on the Security Council and the entire entity.

We demand that the central banks of China, Russia and the European Central Bank give a zero-rate credit to Cuba for the damage caused by the blockade between 2019 and 2020, amounting to \$9,157,000. Once the blockade is lifted, José Martí’s homeland would be able to return that capital, without interest, in annual installments.

July 15, 2021  
Liberation Party (Partido de la Liberación) of Argentina  
Chilean Communist Party (Proletarian Action — PCAP)  
Solidarity Work Group (A Thousand for Cuba) — Argentina



Hands Off Cuba demonstration, Philadelphia, July 26.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

‘Justice for Haiti! Let revolutionary Cuba live!’

By Maureen Skehan  
Boston

A multinational, multigenerational, pro-socialist crowd, including Indigenous, Black, Latinx, immigrant rights, peace and justice, union, faith-based, youth, veterans, LGBTQ2S+ and disability rights organizers, converged at Park Street Station, Boston, July 24, for a militant and unified “People’s Speak Out and Rally” to demand “No U\$ Intervention in Haiti, Reparations Now!” and “Let Revolutionary Cuba Live! End the U.S. Blockade!”

Co-chaired by longtime Puerto Rican independentista Dorothea Manuela and immigrant rights leader and abolitionist Bishop Filipe Teixeira — a leader in the struggle to free imprisoned Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab from a U.S.-backed garrison in Cabo Verde — the rally

included beautiful Caribbean music and militant chants of “Cuba Sí, Bloqueo No!” and “Justice for Haiti, U.S. Out!”

Passionate speakers condemned U.S. aggression and intervention in the Caribbean and Latin America, including its backing of fascist, mercenary forces repressing the popular movements of Brazil and Colombia and undermining the revolutionary socialist governments of Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia.

Many speakers expressed their heartfelt thanks and revolutionary love for Haiti and Cuba, emphasizing each country’s historic contributions in the struggle against slavery, racism and colonialism. Haiti’s victorious revolution against slavery in 1804 led to the first independent Black Republic in the Western Hemisphere.

Cuba’s world-renowned internationalism, in solidarity with workers and oppressed nations globally, expresses

confidence that socialism will ultimately prevail in this hemisphere, including here in the U.S. — the belly of the beast.

Many left the rally committed to build greater unity and solidarity for socialism in Boston and the U.S.

Initiated by Workers World Party and the July 26th Coalition, the rally’s co-endorsers included the Alliance for Secular and Democratic South Asia, Answer, Boricuas for Liberation, Boston May Day Coalition, Colectivo de Boston-Fora Bolsonaro, Committee for Peace and Human Rights, Fanmi Lavalas, International Action Center, Massachusetts Peace Action, Palestinian House of New England, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Team Solidarity, USW Local 8751 Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United American Indians of New England and the Young Black Panther Party. □



WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Chantal Casimir, member, USW Local 8751, spoke at the Boston rally July24.



# Victory for Perú Libre and Mariáteguismo

By Christian Noakes

For more than a month, Keiko Fujimori and others in Peru’s right-wing opposition attempted to overturn the results of the June 6 presidential election that gave Perú Libre party’s candidate Pedro Castillo a narrow lead over Fujimori. On July 19, the National Jury of Elections upheld the results, officially declaring Castillo the winner. Castillo is set to take office July 28 for a five-year term.

The right wing’s undemocratic campaign against the popular teacher and peasant leader included the utilization of the bourgeois-dominated media to smear Castillo. There was attempted bribery, largely orchestrated by Vladimiro Montesinos, former intelligence chief, under the dictator Alberto Fujimori from his prison cell. (midwesternmarx.com, July 9)

Like the former president and father of Keiko Fujimori, Montesinos is serving time for corruption charges.

Perú Libre cites Marx, Lenin and Peru’s own José Carlos Mariátegui as the intellectual basis for its political vision. (tinyurl.com/4jnsbfwe) Unlike Marx and Lenin, Mariátegui’s contributions to the struggle for national liberation and socialism are far less known in much of the English-speaking world. Since Perú Libre pays such respect to Mariátegui, a study of his role can help in understanding events in that country.

Considered by many to be the founder of Latin American communism, he is celebrated for being the first person to utilize Marxist methods of analysis in order to



Peru declares Pedro Castillo winner, July 19.

better understand concrete reality in Peru and for carving a path to revolution based on these particular historical conditions.

### Attention to Indigenous, peasantry

As such, Mariátegui was one of the first Latin American socialists to acknowledge the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and Indigenous peoples. Rather than take a paternalistic or humanitarian position, he believed that these overlapping groups needed to be the architects of their own liberation and to do so using their own cultural knowledge, experience and language.

The attention Mariátegui paid to these marginalized populations, in both his thought and organizing efforts, set him apart from many of his contemporaries. He provided an ideological foundation for the melding of revolutionary socialism and struggles for Indigenous social, political and cultural inclusion throughout the region.

The practical or material grounding of his theories was, by itself, a monumental contribution to the struggle of oppressed and exploited Peruvians. His revolutionary

activities, however, went well beyond the written page. In 1928, he founded the Peruvian Socialist Party, a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party that sought to unite the country’s urban and rural working class, under the direction of a core group of communists, and connect the national struggle to the internationalist communist movement via the Third International.

As the party’s first secretary-general, Mariátegui trained and developed party leaders or cadres from working-class and Indigenous populations, who then organized their communities. Among the party’s activities was the creation of the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP), a Marxist trade union federation that worked in tandem with the party to organize and unite the urban and rural masses.

Mariátegui’s emphasis on the revolutionary role of peasant and Indigenous masses, the subjective factor of class consciousness and the dialectical relationship between nationalism and internationalism have had a lasting impact on both Peruvian Marxism and Latin American Marxism as a whole.

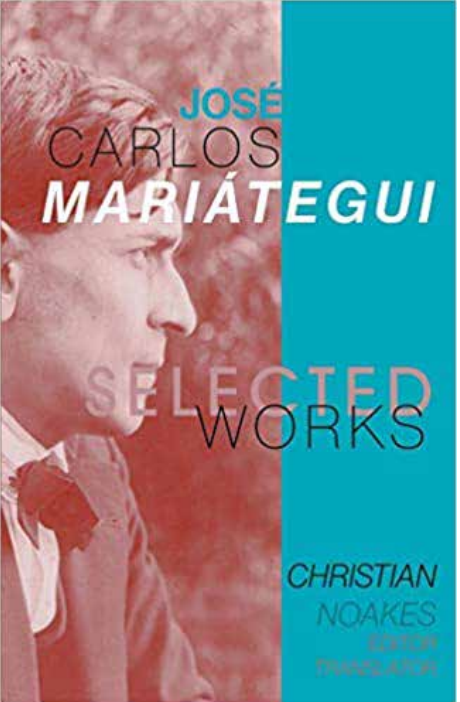
Mariátegui’s influence in the region is wide-reaching and can be seen in the likes of Ché Guevara, the Sandinistas and the liberation theologians. His thought is undeniably foundational to Perú Libre’s political orientation and aspirations.

The victory of Pedro Castillo and Perú Libre belongs to the country’s oppressed and exploited masses. However, the struggle is far from over. Now, according to the writing of the party, begins the “search for a new, more equitable and just society which will rescue its children from modern slavery in its various forms. Building that society is not an easy task; it

implies fighting against recesses of power, embedded not only in its institutions but in our minds.

“To achieve the Party’s aspirations, we must bear in mind that the Party needs in its leadership, like the government in its public officials, highly technical politicians and highly political technicians, neither of these two qualities must be divorced from the other. They must be concatenated, so that the revolutionary machinery can march.”

Viva Perú Libre! Viva Mariáteguismo!



Parts of this article have been adapted from the author’s introduction to *Iskra Books’ “Selected Works of José Carlos Mariátegui.”* A free PDF is available at [tinyurl.com/5cwjwkss](https://tinyurl.com/5cwjwkss) and print copies are available for purchase at [tinyurl.com/r4drba99](https://tinyurl.com/r4drba99).

## Haiti

# Conflict grows as President Moïse is buried

By G. Dunkel

Wearing a Kevlar bulletproof vest, Martine Moïse praised her late spouse, assassinated President Jovenel Moïse, at his July 23 funeral in Cap-Haïtien, for “defending the poorest against the cupidity of the elites” and striving to reform “a rotten and unjust political system.” Using Haitian Creole and French, she attacked the “oligarchs who have won a battle but not the war.” (haitilibre.com, July 24)

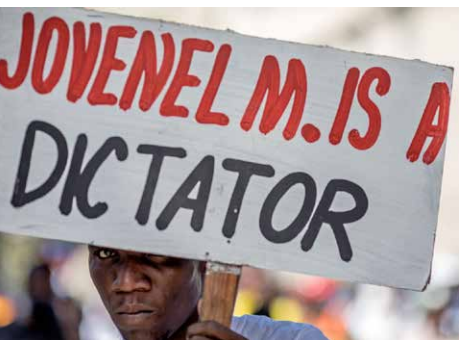
The hundreds of thousands of Haitians throughout the country that came out time and time again over the years that Moïse ran the country to protest him and his policies obviously disagree with her. Protests outside the Moïse family compound in Cap-Haïtien wafted tear gas, smoke from burning tires and the sounds of gunfire into the ceremony — which the Moïse family made a point of paying for.

After gunshots were heard, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda

Thomas-Greenfield, heading the U.S. funeral delegation, hastily left, driving directly to the airport at high speed over the rough roads in northern Haiti, according to the video on the NBC website. The White House announced the delegation’s safe return.

A large demonstration called for justice for Moïse in Trou-du-nord, his hometown, about 20 miles past Cap-Haïtien on the way to the Dominican Republic. There was also a major pro-Moïse demonstration of Haitian expats in Paris a few days earlier.

The U.N. and various religious NGOs report that the number of internally displaced individuals is growing in Haiti and that the increased political instability is preventing people from earning enough to feed themselves and their families. The percentage of food-insecure individuals — people who don’t regularly get enough to eat to sustain themselves — is 48%, one of the highest rates in the world.



Protesters against Moïse.

The BBC and the Washington Post report that bandit activity along coast roads — especially around Port-au-Prince — is so great that drivers take ferries rather than roads.

### New York Times exposes U.S. control

The 10 Haitian senators, still in office because their terms are staggered, met a few days after the assassination and appointed president of the Senate, Joseph Lambert, as provisional president. One of the constitutions that might be in force — there are some disputes about which one is currently operational — suggest that they followed correct procedure. But after Lambert made a few phone calls, he suspended his campaign. He had no apparent support in Washington.

According to the June 23 New York Times, politicians, business people, political parties and the Haitian government itself have been spending tens of thousands of dollars on lobbyists and political consultants in Washington.

According to the Times, a group chat among some Haitian politicians and

officials and their U.S. advisors “showed them strategizing about countering American critics and potential rivals for the presidency and looking for ways to cast blame for the killing.” The Haitian government paid an outfit called Mercury Public Affairs at least \$285,000 for six months work and continues to pay \$67,000 a month to a consortium of public relations firms.

Beyond all this maneuvering, there are Haitian businesses and individual politicians that want to whip up interest for their projects, even if they have to shell out for this interest from their own pockets.

When the NY Times tries to explain Haitian history, because this history has a direct bearing on what the U.S. can do now, it often leaves out some inconvenient truths. A July 25 article entitled “We Owe Haiti a Debt We Can’t Repay” correctly points out that “[i]nstead of welcoming and supporting the fledgling republic, the United States refused to recognize Haiti until 1862, after the Southern states seceded from the Union.”

The article then concludes with the U.S. occupying Haiti in 1915 “after the assassination of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam.”

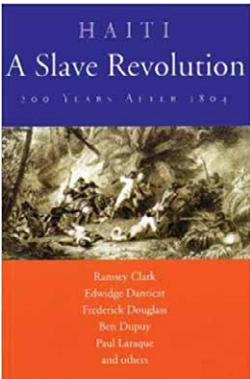
It doesn’t mention that a Marine raiding party, shortly before the 1915 occupation began, slipped into Port-au-Prince and seized Haiti’s gold reserves — worth at that time around \$500,000 — and turned them over to First National City Bank in New York — now Citibank.

This is indeed a debt that the U.S. could indeed repay — with interest. □

## Haiti: A Slave Revolution 200 years after 1804

Published in 2004, “Haiti: A Slave Revolution,” uses art, poetry, photos and essays to document the victory of an enslaved people liberating themselves, and their centuries of continued resistance to embargoes, occupation, dictatorship, U.S. intervention and global capital.

Available as a FREE download at [tinyurl.com/IACbooks](https://tinyurl.com/IACbooks)





Alex Saab

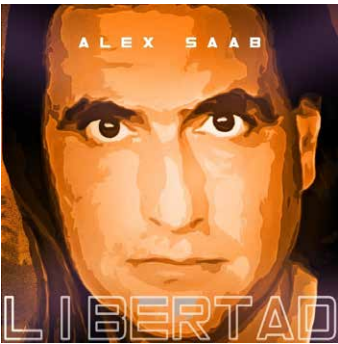
# Arrest warrant in someone else’s name

The following slightly edited article first appeared in the Orinoco Tribune July 22, as "Cape Verde Admits Alex Saab’s Arrest Warrant was in Someone Else’s Name (Kidnapping)."

A year after the arrest of the Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab, Cape Verde’s Attorney General (PGR), Luis José Landim, admitted that the warrant used to arrest him, June 12, 2020, was actually issued in somebody else’s name.

In the counter-allegations presented before the Constitutional Court, the PGR requested a correction in these terms: “It was mentioned that there was an international arrest warrant issued by Interpol against the appellant, issued by the U.S. judicial authorities in the file. The name on the order is the name of Álvaro Enrique Pulido-Vargas.”

Later, the PGR stated that the documents were issued in the name of Alex



Saab and Álvaro Enrique Pulido-Vargas, but “by mistake, in the extradition request sent to Cape Verde, the requesting State attached the first page of the original order in the name of Álvaro Enrique Pulido-Vargas ... but in the following pages of the order, as well as in the Portuguese and Spanish translations, they are in the name of Alex Saab” — further evidence of the mounting irregularities in the case.

What is a proven fact is that on June 12, 2020, when Alex Saab was arrested while [his plane was] refueling on the island of Sal, neither the order nor the Interpol Red Notice was presented to him. In fact, the Red Notice only arrived on the 13th but was ultimately annulled, since the Red Notice is not a judicial order for imprisonment.

To issue the Red Notice, the requesting party—in this case the United States—had to present an arrest warrant to the Interpol

General Secretariat, but it did not do so, violating its own rules. Therefore, when Alex Saab was arrested, he was not presented with the Red Notice and could not have been, as it was not issued until after his arrest. Saab’s defense only received a copy of the Red Notice June 18, 2020, almost a week later.

Henrique Borges, Cape Verde’s representative at the ECOWAS court, presented a communication between Interpol, Washington and Praia [the capital of Cape Verde], in which he confirmed that the red notice was issued retroactively.

**Chain of illegalities**

Special Envoy Alex Saab was arrested June 12, 2020, during a technical stop-over on the island of Sal, Republic of Cape Verde, as part of a diplomatic mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the time of his arrest, there was no Interpol Red Notice, and when the red notice against Ambassador Saab came, there was no arrest warrant. The Interpol Red Notice was issued in violation of the Interpol Rules and was therefore canceled on June 25.

“In consequence, Saab’s arrest was illegal, and that is why so many legal experts agree in calling it a plain and simple kidnapping,” an international affairs expert said to Orinoco Tribune.

Alex Saab remained in prison, held without any grounds, until June 29, 2020, when the United States’ request for extradition arrived. However, the extradition request did not contain an arrest warrant in the name of Ambassador Saab. Rather, it was in another person’s name: The arrest warrant was issued in the name of Mr. Álvaro Pulido-Vargas.

In its arguments, Saab’s defense pointed out the absence of the arrest warrant, both in its refutation of the extradition request presented on January 14, and in its appeal before the Constitutional Court.

Likewise, the Attorney General, in his statement before the Constitutional Court on June 28, admitted that there was an error in the arrest warrant attached to the Extradition Request, and [he] attached the corrected version of the arrest warrant of the other person. □

## A happy warrior Esther Bejarano ¡Presente!

By Victor Grossman

This lightly edited article first appeared in Berlin Bulletin No. 193, July 20, 2021.

She was all of 96 years, yet Esther Bejarano’s death hits hard, leaving a painful gap in Germany’s anti-fascist scene. Until the final weeks of her long life, she was a fighter, speaking, singing and passing the good word along — especially to young people.

Her life almost ended horribly when she was 19, after being crammed into a cattle car with other Jewish Germans on a final route to Auschwitz. Unlike most of her family she survived, thanks to her ability to play the piano and please some Kultur-lover among the killers.

“Can you play the accordion too?” Yes, she lied, and picked up the basics quickly enough to be included in the “girl orchestra” used to calm and deceive incoming trainloads of human beings, thus avoiding incidents on the way to the gas chambers. It was a nasty job but enabled her to survive, until, after escaping the guards on a forced

“death march” at the war’s end, she was rescued by Red Army and U.S. army units.

Esther went to what was still Palestine. I can add a personal note here. I was lucky enough, as a Harvard delegate, to go to the first World Youth Festival in Prague in 1947. At the Palestine evening we saw a chic, uniformed Zionist dance-and-song group organized by the Jewish Agency. And the Ron Workers Chorus, a leftist group, no uniforms, singing leftist songs, both Jewish and Arab like the singers.

The Festival asked both to perform on the same evening in one place. But after the Jewish Agency group finished and the Ron chorus was ready to begin, all lights in the huge opera house went out. A minute later they were back — and a cloud of leaflets with a Zionist message floated down from the top gallery. Only then was the chorus with Esther able to sing. So I saw and heard her 74 years ago!

She got married, had children, but was not happy. As she wrote: “My husband and I could not stand Israeli politics. It was a catastrophe. ... Life was difficult because we did not agree with the terrible

things that were done to the Palestinians.”

In 1960 she and her family made the dramatic move back to Germany, to Hamburg. But she had not forgotten her earlier suffering. She never ceased combating fascism and former Nazis wherever they showed their heads. In West Germany in the 1960s, that still meant in virtually every walk of life, right up to Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger (1966-1969) and President Heinrich Lübke (1959-1969).

She founded a German branch of the Auschwitz Committee in her living room and became honorary president of the Association of Victims of the Nazis, on occasion braving water cannon to stop neo-Nazi parades. She was active in peace demonstrations and supported Cuba against the blockade.

After 1988 she joined her son, her daughter and young Turkish-German musicians in groups playing modernized international songs, Jewish songs and new political songs for all the good causes, including the rights of Palestinians to conduct their boycott campaign. In countless schools she used her story to oppose the



many inroads of the fascists, and her last action was to join in urging that May 8th, the day of victory over the Nazis, be made a national holiday.

Most media and many politicians voiced their praise and mourning — after almost totally ignoring her in life and attacking and trying to squelch organizations she was active in, as an avowed Communist. They stressed how she had always fought anti-Semitism. She had indeed, ceaselessly, but not in the way they used the term, labeling everyone an anti-Semite who criticized Israeli government policies, its settlements, occupation, repression, its missile and drone attacks.

Her opposition to this and her clearly leftist views and actions have gone almost unmentioned by officialdom and its media. But not by the thousands who attended the funeral ceremony, who had loved her, fought at her side, enjoyed her music — and would greatly miss her. □

## Cleveland baseball team Racist name, mascot finally leaving

By Martha Grevatt  
Cleveland

The big front page news July 24 was the new name of the city’s Major League Baseball team: the Cleveland Guardians. The “Cleveland Indians” and their despicable mascot—a racist caricature known as “Chief Wahoo”—had finally found their rightful place in the dustbin of history.

For decades Indigenous activists and allies protested outside home games, demanding the team scrap its mascot and change its name. For decades team owners were intransigent, citing “tradition.” In 2018 they announced that the offensive logo would no longer appear on player uniforms — but merchandise bearing the image was still sold.

Only last year was it announced that

the process of choosing a new name would begin, and the mascot would be retired.

The new name gives a nod to Cleveland’s iconic landmark, the “Guardians of Traffic,” that adorns the Hope Memorial Bridge. The bridge, named for an English immigrant stonemason who worked on the art deco statues, spans the Cuyahoga River connecting the East and West Sides.

However, the new team name represents an appeasement of backward-thinking fans who strongly opposed the change. It was chosen in part because it contains the same last five letters of the old racist name. The new logo retains the original script font and color scheme. The fans — who came to games wearing face paint

and headdresses, referred to their team as “the Tribe” and let out “war whoops” when a hit was scored — represent a major source of profit for the owners.

Cynthia Connolly, a member of the Lake Erie Native American Council, welcomed the new name but explained that many



Protest outside Cleveland home baseball game, July 24, 2020.

Indigenous Clevelanders won’t become overnight fans due to “over 60 years of trauma and torment that we’ve been dealing with.” (cleveland.com, July 23) The Council, the American Indian Movement, the Committee of 500 Years of Dignity and Resistance and the Lake Erie Chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society comprise the Cleveland Indigenous Coalition, which pressed the team owners to drop the offensive name and mascot.

Now is the time for each and every professional, college and high school sports team — starting with Atlanta’s baseball and Kansas City’s football teams — to end their racist traditions of degrading Indigenous people with hateful names, mascots and fan rituals. □



## WORKERS WORLD editorial

*Continued from page 1*

military might in the 1961 Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) invasion to creating a secret “Cuban Twitter” to stir unrest and organize “smart mobs” for a “Cuban spring” to overturn the government. (The Guardian, April 3, 2014)

The most recent campaign against Cuba includes thousands of boilerplate anti-Cuba twitter accounts linked to an automated system that rapidly retweets.

Disinformation expert Julián Macías Tovar told Newsweek that 100,000 tweets using an anti-Cuba hashtag were sent July 9, with 500,000 the following day and 1.5 million by July 11. Tovar added: “If there are accounts with few followers who make many tweets or retweets, newly created accounts with a fake profile picture ... that’s always suspicious.”

Reuters has stated categorically that posts of protests in Cuba—shared in the millions—were falsely mislabeled as anti-Cuban government protests. Some of the photos were in fact pictures of a 2011 protest in Egypt—and some actually of a large crowd gathered in support of Cuba’s 2018 May Day march celebrating its workers revolution! (tinyurl.com/dbh5y7sf)

Disinformation has included cultural intervention, like the promotion of an anti-communist reggaeton song coming from the Miami Cuban community, that has its origin in the wealthy white landowners who fled Cuba when the Revolution triumphed. Over the decades, many physical and psychological operations against Cuba have originated in Miami.

The disinformation campaign launched as some protests were taking place inside

Cuba. The country has been hit recently by shortages in food and pandemic-related medical supplies like syringes, to which the U.S. blocks easy access.

Revolutionary Cuba is celebrated for its innovative, comprehensive and free medical care, with medical teams traveling in solidarity to other countries, especially during the pandemic. A recent U.S. political cartoon mocked this achievement, falsely showing a bleeding protester hauled away by grim police boasting of free medical care.

But during the pandemic, Cuba—still classified in the world economy as an “underdeveloped” country—has managed with its socialist planned system to limit COVID-19 deaths to 214 per million people. U.S. profit-oriented health care has lost 1,882 people per million, had over three times more cases per million than Cuba and leads the world in total deaths—now over 625,000. (worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries, July 21)

Many of the achievements of the Cuban Revolution are unknown to people in the U.S.—though not to the rest of the world—because of the ongoing U.S. campaign against communism. In place since the 19th century, virulent during the 1950s McCarthy era, this anti-communist campaign by the U.S. ruling-class strategists became focused in the 1960s on trying to break the socialist revolution taking place only 90 miles off U.S. shores.

Right-wing Christianity backed capitalism through literature funneled into churches on how to oppose Cuba, China, the USSR and other Communist Party-led or “Communist-leaning” countries. In 1962 the National Governor’s Conference

created a committee to coordinate anti-communist high school curricula.

By 1963 U.S. corporations were spending about \$25 million a year on anti-communist literature distributed to customers and workers on the job. (Sara Diamond, “Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States,” Guilford Publications, 1995, pp. 50-52)

Now, the latest anti-communist campaign is underway as “American Marxism” hits the top of the New York Times best-seller list. Written by Mark Levin, a right-wing Fox News star, and a Cold War warrior resuscitated, the book uses classic red-baiting tactics to attack almost every progressive initiative underway in the U.S.

### Big Lie with a vengeance

This is the “War Is Peace” Big Lie with a vengeance! As socialists we know the real legacy of Marxism—based on solidarity in the struggles against injustice and inequality—shines in the beacon of revolutionary Cuba.

Anti-Cuba propaganda is the order of the day for the U.S. government, because Cuba has been so successful in forging ahead in its revolutionary vision, despite the vicious attacks and blockades placed in its way.

Led by its Communist Party over the decades, Cuba has created campaigns, initiatives and formal government agencies to significantly address material inequalities and cultural insensitivities. Government officials have frankly admitted mistakes rooted in the past, and with an electoral system built on full representation of all sectors of the country,

have specifically addressed issues facing women, LGBTQ+ people, Afro-Cubans, Indigenous peoples, disabled people and others with special oppressions.

The current anti-Cuba campaign is tied inextricably to the U.S. war on a socialist future. And no wonder! In a survey from June 11-15, Axios/Momentive found capitalism rapidly losing its popularity with young people in the U.S., with 18-34 year olds now almost evenly split between those who view capitalism negatively and those who view it positively. (tinyurl.com/xrpce8v4)

In a 2020 Gallup poll about elections—a far from radical source—45% of U.S. people indicated they would vote for a socialist for president. (tinyurl.com/m36u4u2u)

We place the campaign against Cuba in the context of the long U.S. war against communism—and we are alert to how this poison still spreads, virulently alive, through every aspect of life in the U.S.

We are in the midst of a battle of ideas that will determine our future—the future of a socialist Cuba and our own future building a path to socialism.

As Fidel Castro said in his historic remarks on the battle between capitalism and socialism: “A revolution can only be born from culture and ideas. No people become revolutionary by force. Those who sow ideas have no need to suppress the people ever. Weapons in the hands of those same people are used to fight those abroad who try to take away their achievements.”

From inside the capitalist beast, we must continue resolutely to fight in the battle of ideas. Defend Cuba! Defend socialism! □



**Amílcar Cabral, one of Africa’s foremost anti-colonial leaders, and Fidel Castro together at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana, which focused on common goals of resistance to colonialism and imperialism and the establishment of an alliance across colonial national boundaries.**

## Fidel on the ‘battle of ideas’

*These slightly edited excerpts are from a speech given by Fidel Castro Ruz, speaking as president of the Republic of Cuba, Feb. 3, 1999, at the Central University of Venezuela. The complete remarks are available at tinyurl.com/7uf96wy2.*

“We have had to wage, and will have to continue waging, a more difficult battle against that extremely powerful empire: a ceaseless ideological battle that they stepped up with all their resources after the collapse of the socialist camp, when fully confident in our ideas we decided to continue forward ... without ever forgetting the immense and invincible support and solidarity of the peoples which we always had and which makes us feel under a greater obligation to struggle. ...

“[The U.S.] was unable to defeat a united people, a people armed with just

ideas, a people endowed with a great political consciousness, because that is most important for us. We have resisted everything and are ready to continue resisting for as long as need be, thanks to the seeds planted throughout those decades, thanks to the ideas and the consciousness developed during that time. It has been our best weapon and it shall remain so. ...

“We have withstood that warfare. ... We are winning the battle of ideas. Still, the battlefield is not limited to our small island, although the small island has to fight. Today, the world is the battlefield; it is everywhere, in all continents, in all institutions, in every forum. This is the good side of the globalized struggle. We must defend the small island while fighting throughout the huge world they dominate or try to dominate.” □

## Black Lives Matter defends Cuba’s right to sovereignty

*This statement, first posted on the BLM twitter account July 14, has generated considerable coverage. Many in the corporate media have attacked BLM for the post. Workers World wishes to extend our full solidarity for this courageous statement.*

Black Lives Matter condemns the U.S. federal government’s inhumane treatment of Cubans and urges it to immediately lift the economic embargo. This cruel and inhumane policy, initiated with the explicit intention of destabilizing the country and undermining Cubans’ right to choose their own government, is at the heart of Cuba’s current crisis. Since 1962, the United States has forced pain and suffering on the people of Cuba by cutting off food, medicine and supplies, costing the tiny island nation an estimated \$130 billion.

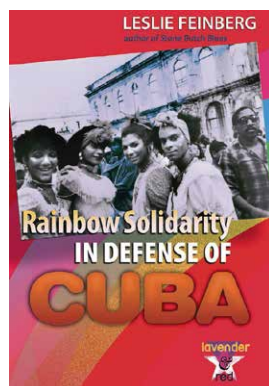
Without that money, it is harder for Cuba to acquire medical equipment needed to develop its own COVID-19 vaccines and equipment for food production. This comes in spite of the country’s strong medical care

and history of lending doctors and nurses to disasters around the world.

The people of Cuba are being punished by the U.S. government because the country has maintained its commitment to sovereignty and self-determination. U.S. leaders have tried to crush this revolution for decades. Instead of international amity, respect and goodwill, the U.S. government has only instigated suffering for the country’s 11 million people—of which 4 million are Black and Brown.

Cuba has historically demonstrated solidarity with oppressed peoples of African descent, from protecting Black revolutionaries like Assata Shakur through granting her asylum, to supporting Black liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and South Africa.

Now, we look to President Biden to end the embargo, something Barack Obama called for in 2016. This embargo is a blatant human rights violation and it must come to an end. □



## Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba

by Leslie Feinberg

**This ground-breaking book is a compilation of 25 articles about same-sex love and sex/gender variance in Cuba’s pre- and post-revolutionary history.**

**Available, along with complete Lavender & Red series, as free downloads at [workers.org/books](http://workers.org/books).**



# China y África: Cooperación mutua, no neocolonialismo

COMENTARIO

Por Ernie Hamer (Autor invitado)

*Basado en una charla dada en una reunión de Workers World/ Partido Mundo Obrero en Buffalo, N.Y., el 27 de abril de 2021.*

Con la República Popular de China en ascenso, las fuerzas del imperialismo estadounidense están comenzando a entrar en pánico a medida que las mareas globales cambian gradualmente en su contra. El Partido Comunista de China ha llegado a su centenario, celebrando el inmenso progreso realizado por su sistema socialista.

Al mismo tiempo, los medios de comunicación estadounidenses han experimentado un importante aumento de la retórica antichina destinada a restar importancia a los logros de la China Popular y a pintar una imagen de China que sencillamente no es congruente con la realidad. Una de las falsas narrativas que se han esparcido sobre China es que es una potencia “imperialista”, citando regularmente las relaciones que China ha construido en África.

África es un continente extremadamente rico en recursos, pero que carece de la infraestructura necesaria para extraerlos y utilizarlos. Por ello, los gobiernos africanos suelen mirar hacia el exterior para encontrar financiación para los proyectos de infraestructura de sus países.

En total, África tiene una deuda pendiente de más de \$350.000 millones de dólares y, de esa cantidad, al menos el 21% corresponde a China, lo que la convierte en el mayor acreedor. (aiddata.org, 31 de marzo)

Entre los años 2000 y 2019, China proporcionó \$153.000 millones de dólares en compromisos de préstamos a África, con los principales compromisos de préstamos de Angola, Etiopía, Zambia y Kenia. (chinaafricaloandebt.bu.edu)

Estos préstamos chinos se están utilizando principalmente para financiar el déficit de infraestructuras de África. En un continente donde más de 600 millones

de africanos no tienen acceso a la electricidad, el 40% de los préstamos chinos se destinaron a la generación y transmisión de energía. Otro 30% se destinó a la modernización de la infraestructura de transporte de África.

En un Foro de Cooperación China-África celebrado en 2018 en Pekín con líderes africanos, el presidente chino Xi Jinping declaró: “Seguimos un enfoque de “cinco - no” en nuestras relaciones con África: Ninguna interferencia en la búsqueda de los países africanos de vías de desarrollo que se ajusten a sus condiciones nacionales; ninguna interferencia en los asuntos internos de los países africanos; ninguna imposición de nuestra voluntad a los países africanos; ningún apego a las condiciones políticas de la asistencia a África; y ninguna búsqueda de beneficios políticos egoístas en la inversión y la cooperación financiera con África.” (focac.org, 3 de septiembre de 2018)

Lo que se expone en ese enfoque difiere enormemente del de Estados Unidos y de Occidente. Sin embargo, a pesar de ello, China es constantemente pintada como una nación imperialista que se aprovecha de África y de su gente.

### Falsas narrativas sobre China

Las prácticas de préstamo de China son a menudo objeto de escrutinio, al ser calificadas de explotadoras de las naciones de África. En cuanto a la creciente presencia de China en África, el ex ministro sudafricano de Comercio e Industria, Rob Davies, dijo que “sólo puede ser algo bueno... porque significa que ya no tenemos que firmar en la línea lo que nos pongan delante de nuestras narices. ... Ahora tenemos alternativas y eso nos beneficia”. (Financial Times, 24 de agosto de 2010)

Una y otra vez, se ha demostrado que las prácticas de préstamo de China con África no sólo no son explotadoras, sino que son beneficiosas. Los investigadores han demostrado que “no hay pruebas de embargos de activos en lugar de pagos de préstamos en África, o de hecho, en cualquier lugar

entre los prestatarios chinos en dificultades de deuda”, según el artículo de Deborah Bräutigam [en The Diplomat]: “Chinese Debt Relief: Realidad y ficción”. (tinyurl.com/jmv6n7k)

Entre 2000 y 2018, China ha condonado \$9.800 millones de dólares de deuda a otros países, entre ellos Cuba y más de 20 naciones africanas receptoras de préstamos del gobierno chino. (forbes.com, 29 de mayo de 2019)

Otra falsa narrativa predominante afirma que las empresas chinas en África sólo emplearán y beneficiarán a los trabajadores chinos. En realidad, “las encuestas sobre el empleo en los proyectos chinos en África encuentran repetidamente que tres cuartas partes o más de los trabajadores son, de hecho, locales.” (Washington Post, 12 de abril de 2018)

Incluso más allá de las prácticas de empleo, China ha encabezado la investigación académica para ayudar a mejorar el bienestar general del pueblo africano. La Academia de Ciencias de China está muy involucrada en el apoyo a proyectos de investigación en África, incluida la investigación agronómica destinada a acabar con la escasez de alimentos. (Nature.com, 14 de mayo de 2019)

Según el informe anual de seguimiento de la educación mundial de junio de 2020, China iba a ofrecer 12.000 becas a estudiantes africanos en el próximo año académico, en gran parte para apoyar los estudios en universidades chinas, lo que representa más becas universitarias que las de todos los principales gobiernos occidentales juntos.

Otra falsedad es que China es acusada regularmente de acaparamiento de tierras, el acto de adquirir tierras a gran escala para su propio beneficio financiero. Los

investigadores del Instituto Internacional de Investigación sobre Políticas Alimentarias “recopilaron una base de datos de 57 casos en los que supuesta-

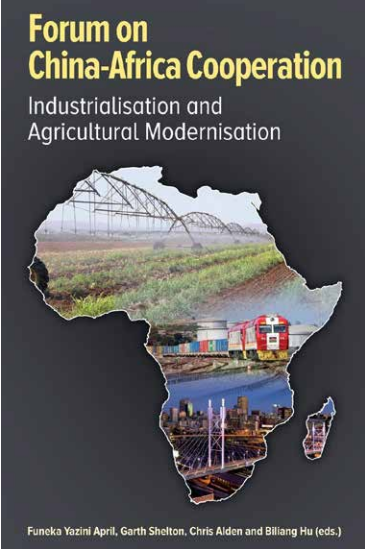
mente las empresas chinas (o el gobierno) habían adquirido o negociado grandes cantidades (más de 500 hectáreas) de tierras agrícolas africanas”, que fue publicada por Johns Hopkins University Press.

“Si todos estos informes de los medios de comunicación hubieran sido noticias reales, esto habría ascendido a la muy alarmante cifra de 6 millones de hectáreas, el 1% de todas las tierras de cultivo de

África. Pasamos tres años rastreando cada uno de los casos. ... Confirmamos que casi un tercio de estas historias ... eran literalmente falsas. En los casos restantes, encontramos verdaderas inversiones chinas. Pero la cantidad total de tierra realmente adquirida por las empresas chinas fue sólo de unas 240.000 hectáreas: el 4% de la cantidad comunicada”. (ifpri.org, marzo de 2021)

En general, las inversiones chinas vinculadas a su política no intervencionista sirven a su objetivo de desarrollo económico a largo plazo. Aunque no son perfectas, las inversiones chinas en los países africanos les proporcionan una financiación alternativa y más beneficiosa para ambas partes, lo que ayuda a mejorar las condiciones de vida de la población de estos países y también aleja a Occidente de la explotación en la que históricamente se ha basado.

Tenemos que entender y reconocer que la relación entre China y África es muy diferente a la que existe entre otras naciones occidentales y África. No hacerlo sólo sirve para avivar una peligrosa retórica anticomunista cuando lo más importante es defender a China de estos ataques. □



## Philadelphia in solidarity with Cuba

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Around 100 people gathered outside Philadelphia City Hall July 26 to raise up international solidarity with the people of Cuba and demand: U.S. hands off Cuba! End the Blockade! Asantewaa Nkrumah-Ture with Black Alliance for Peace and Ted Kelly with Workers World Party chaired the rally. Speakers represented many of the international struggles Cuba has provided support to.

Fermin Morales from the grassroots organization Philly Boricuas described the historic solidarity between his native Puerto Rico and Cuba in opposing U.S. occupation. “What does the U.S. have to offer people from Cuba — homelessness, police brutality, racism, drug addiction?” he noted. Mexican immigrant activist Carmen Guerrero with the Coalición Fortaleza Latina PA delivered her remarks in Spanish to broad applause from rally participants.

Deandra Jefferson with Black Alliance for Peace stated: “Cuba has shown the world that socialism is viable. Just compare conditions in Cuba to those in Haiti where the U.S. has intervened and



Hyun Lee, with Korea Peace Now! PA speaking at Cuba solidarity rally in Philadelphia July 26.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

occupied for years.”

Hyun Lee with Korea Peace Now! PA stated: “After a three-year war, the U.S. and Korea settled for a ceasefire 68 years ago, but that war still goes on today. The DPRK and Cuba are both under some of the heaviest sanctions in the world. We need to end this.” Godfrey Sithole, area representative of the African National Congress, praised Cuba for its internationalism, especially in support of liberation struggles in African countries.

Clancy Murray from Workers World spoke on Cuba’s community based health

care system, noting: “A better world is possible, and Cuba’s medical system is testament to this.” Sara Flounders with the International Action Center discussed the purpose and impact of U.S. sanctions. She asked: “Why does U.S. imperialism, with all its economic power and its global military bases, see Cuba as a ‘national security threat?’ The capitalist class knows that revolutionary ideas are contagious — more so than COVID-19. They can spread around the globe.

“The U.S. relies on suppression, often through sanctions, an act of war.

U.S. sanctions used against 39 countries involve cutting off food and medicines, resulting in hunger and sicknesses that would otherwise be solvable. They applied sanctions to Haiti for over 60 years, crippling their economy. But Haiti stood alone. Cuba has international solidarity. Cuba Sí, Bloqueo No! End the sanctions now!” The rally was organized by Philadelphia chapters of the Black Alliance for Peace, Workers World Party and the Party for Socialism and Liberation. □





FOTO: ELVERT BARNES

Una manifestación de 2017 de ACT UP (Coalición contra el sida para liberar el poder), en la ciudad de Nueva York. ‘Criminalización del VIH es racista y homofóbica.’

# Una historia marxista del VIH/SIDA

Parte 1

Por Devin Cole

Hace cuarenta años, el 5 de junio de 1981, se informó del primer caso de lo que llegó a conocerse como VIH/SIDA en un comunicado de prensa semanal de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades.

El 3 de julio de 1981, el primer reconocimiento del VIH/SIDA en las noticias principales fue hecho por el New York Times, que informó en este titular: “Raro cáncer visto en 41 homosexuales”. En el momento de esa publicación, al menos 8 de las 41 personas ya habían muerto. Estos casos se habían registrado en California y Nueva York. (nyti.ms/3vZTInK)

A finales de 1981, 121 personas habían muerto a causa de esta enfermedad hasta entonces desconocida. En los siguientes 14 años, la enfermedad mataría a cientos de miles de personas en todo el mundo, afectando principalmente a personas negras y morenas, discapacitadas y LGBTQ+ y a quienes se encontraban en la intersección de estas identidades.

Denominada inicialmente GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency) en junio de 1982 — debido a la creencia errónea de que sólo afectaba a los hombres homosexuales — la enfermedad fue rebautizada como Síndrome de

Inmunodeficiencia Adquirida (SIDA) en septiembre de 1982.

En 1984, se anunció que un retrovirus conocido como HTLV-III (Virus Linfotrópico T Humano III) era el virus que causaba el SIDA, y era idéntico al Virus Asociado a la Linfadenopatía, que antes se creía que era la única infección causante del SIDA. En 1985, el HTLV-III/LAV pasó a llamarse oficialmente Virus de la Inmunodeficiencia Humana (VIH). El VIH es la infección que, si no se trata, da lugar a la enfermedad tardía del sida.

Entre 1981 y 1995, cuando la FDA aprobó la primera terapia antirretroviral, al menos 300.000 personas murieron de SIDA en todo el mundo. (tinyurl.com/c8w8m5x6)

La cifra de muertos es sin duda mayor. Millones de personas de la clase trabajadora no tuvieron acceso a las pruebas ni a la atención sanitaria, sufrieron en secreto o murieron antes de que se contabilizaran las estadísticas oficiales, ya que ahora se ha revelado que el VIH/SIDA existía antes de 1981.

¿A quién hay que culpar? Los culpables de siempre: los capitalistas, las farmacéuticas codiciosas, los directores generales de la sanidad y las empresas en el ámbito económico. En la esfera social, los villanos siguen siendo la homofobia, la misoginia y la transmisoginia, el racismo, el capacitismo y otras opresiones sociales que intensifican lo que sólo

puede describirse como una plaga.

Para comprender adecuadamente la calamidad de la crisis del SIDA, debemos examinar a fondo las condiciones que condujeron a tal desastre.

¿Cómo es posible que, en 14 años, una enfermedad matara a más de un cuarto de millón de personas, la mayoría de las cuales estaban oprimidas a nivel nacional y/o social? ¿Cómo fue que el “país más avanzado y desarrollado” del mundo, Estados Unidos, se mostró totalmente inútil en los primeros años de esta plaga, y más tarde apenas fue de ayuda? Esta serie pretende responder a estas preguntas y explicar esas respuestas.

La crisis del sida fue sin duda una crisis médica, pero también fue un ejemplo dramático de la economía capitalista en crisis. Ahora, 40 años después del primer reconocimiento del SIDA, la economía capitalista ha vuelto a ser sacudida por una nueva epidemia: COVID-19.

Hasta el 1 de julio, más de 3.964.766 personas en todo el mundo habían muerto a causa de este virus, con el mayor número de víctimas en Estados Unidos: más de 604.000. (worldometer.com)

Países socialistas como China, Cuba y la RPDC han movilizado sistemas de atención sanitaria basados en principios socialistas para disminuir el número de casos y, sobre todo, el número de muertes, y han conseguido contener el virus. Pero la estructura capitalista de Estados

Unidos, dedicada a los beneficios y a la privatización de la sanidad, ha devastado el bienestar de la gente y ha permitido que mueran cientos de miles de personas.

Muchos observan ahora el paralelismo de COVID-19 con los primeros años de la epidemia de SIDA, y la similar falta de respuesta del gobierno estadounidense al sufrimiento de la clase trabajadora y los oprimidos. Las conexiones son evidentes y se reducen a esto: El capitalismo-imperialismo es un sistema decadente y podrido que ni siquiera es capaz de mantener vivos a sus trabajadores para impulsar el sistema.

Plenamente conscientes de las grietas de esta estructura, sus defensores siguen invirtiendo miles de millones en tácticas de “division y conquista”, teorías de la conspiración y cualquier estratagema que pueda agrandar las divisiones entre la clase trabajadora y los oprimidos y bloquear la solidaridad y la organización de masas para acabar con el sistema.

Cada vez más gente es consciente de que debemos organizarnos juntos para asestar un golpe mortal al capitalismo. Con ello, y sólo con ello, podremos establecer una dictadura del proletariado y construir un sistema socialista.

Sólo entonces epidemias como el SIDA y el COVID serán manejables y, eventualmente, tratables. □

## Acción de DC exige ‘Acabar con detenciones trans por ICE’

Por Judy Greenspan

Llevando pancartas y tres ataúdes pintados de color rosa, los activistas de los derechos de los inmigrantes transgénero y sus partidarios marcharon hacia la Casa Blanca el 23 de junio para exigir el fin de la detención de personas transgénero y VIH+ por parte del Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas. Los ataúdes simbolizaban las muertes de tres mujeres trans, Roxsana Hernández, Victoria Arellano y Johana “Joa” Medina Leon, que murieron entre 2018 y ahora mientras estaban bajo custodia del ICE o poco después. (Washington Blade, 23 de junio)

La protesta comenzó con un servicio conmemorativo para las tres mujeres en la Iglesia Cristiana de National City. Los organizadores de los migrantes trans leyeron declaraciones sobre las tres mujeres y las condiciones que enfrentan los migrantes trans, VIH+ y otros migrantes en riesgo en los campos de detención.

El servicio fue presentado por Issa Noyola, subdirector de Mijente, uno de los grupos de derechos de los migrantes que organizó este evento. Noyola habló de las injusticias a las que se enfrentan los migrantes trans y reprodujo una declaración grabada del sobrino de Roxsana Hernández en Honduras.

Tras el servicio, los activistas trans migrantes salieron a la calle y marcharon hacia la Casa Blanca para llevar su mensaje al presidente Joe Biden. En la



Ataúdes rosas abandonados frente a la Casa Blanca, D.C., 23 de junio.

marcha había más de 25 mujeres trans recientemente liberadas de los centros de detención del ICE. Los manifestantes bloquearon el tráfico durante varios minutos en las calles 16 y H, N.W., cerca de lo que se ha rebautizado como Plaza “Black Lives Matter”. A continuación, los manifestantes entraron en la plaza de Lafayette para celebrar un mitin de clausura.

Los manifestantes dejaron los tres ataúdes apoyados en una valla frente a la Casa Blanca.

Jennicet Gutiérrez, de End Trans Detention Now, dijo a los periodistas en las escaleras de la Iglesia Cristiana de National City que las personas trans

estaban cansadas de esperar justicia. “¿Quieren que esperemos? No tenemos tiempo, no queremos que se añada otro nombre a la larga lista de personas que han muerto en detención”, dijo. (Daily Beast, 24 de junio)

Gutiérrez es una organizadora de Familia: Movimiento de Liberación Trans Queer, uno de los grupos que patrocinó la protesta nacional. En 2015, interrumpió al presidente Barack Obama en un evento del orgullo LGBTQ+ en la Casa Blanca, gritando: “¡Liberen a todos los LGBTQ [de] los centros de detención! Presidente Obama, detenga la tortura y el abuso de las mujeres trans en los

centros de detención. Presidente Obama, soy una mujer trans. Estoy cansada de los abusos”.

Gutiérrez fue entrevistada en Democracy Now! el día después de la protesta del 25 de junio y describió algunos de los muchos casos de abuso de migrantes trans por parte del ICE. (Democracy Now!, 24 de junio)

La lucha de las personas transmigrantes encerradas en centros de detención ha empezado por fin a recibir atención nacional. La protesta del 23 de junio fue la culminación de varias acciones en ciudades de todo Estados Unidos en las que se exigía “¡No al Orgullo en detención! Acabar con la detención de personas trans ahora”.

Una semana antes de la marcha del 23 de junio, ocho grupos de defensa de los derechos de los inmigrantes enviaron una carta al secretario de Seguridad Nacional, Alejandro Mayorkas, y al director en funciones del ICE, Tae Johnson, en la que exigían que el gobierno estadounidense liberara a todos los migrantes trans y a las personas con VIH/sida de la detención del ICE.

Los activistas transmigrantes están decididos a seguir luchando por la justicia hasta que todos los migrantes transgénero y las personas que viven con el VIH/sida sean liberados de la custodia del ICE. Hay una petición en curso y otra información disponible en su sitio web: endtransdetention.org. □